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STATEMENT BY
THE STATE MINISTER FOR YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA
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YOUTH : Marching to the New Millenium

The Secretary General of the United Nations,
The Honorable Chairman of the Conference,
Honorable Ministers for Youth Affairs, Dignitaries,
Distinguished Participants, Representatives of Governments and
Non-Governmental Organizations and Representatives of Youth,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by conveying the warm greetings of the youth of Indonesia to this august forum. I am very honored to represent them to be here in this beautiful city of Lisbon with distinguished dignitaries and colleagues from around the world.

I must also confer my gratitude to those who have made this event possible through their hard work. Our hospitable host the Government of Portugal, the staff of the UN Secretariat, the subsidiary organizations; the regional offices of the United Nations Organizations and member countries, all have contributed immensely to our monumental tasks to help chart a better future for the youth of the world.

The next millenium is just around the corner, and for the human race to shape. The youth of today will begin the journey of humanity as it makes its first step into the next century. Our common task is to empower them to do so.

For our milieu is changing at a speed faster than the ability of Governments to comprehend and react to them. Eradicating the problems faced by the youth will not be easy.

There are indeed some worrying signs. The monetary crisis which has hard hit some countries in East and Southeast Asia have led to economic stagnation and even contraction, causing massive youth unemployment. This indeed is the sad situation which we in Indonesia are experiencing today. We are struggling for our economic survival, and the fabrics of our society are being threatened. Millions of our young people have been laid off from work, unable to feed their family and loosing their self-esteem, and they may stay home for some time if the present situation continues.

Clearly, new adjustments have to be made to re-invigorate our economic potentials, and this must be complemented by a viable social policy to maintain social cohesion and harmony. As much as we crave for change, we also wish to maintain political stability as a basis for economic recovery and development. We are seeing the demands for greater freedom and democracy, especially from the youth. We all cherish these noble objectives, but in the present situation we also have the responsibility to see to it that these objectives are met in constructive, not destructive, ways. Our political system is now in the process of reform, and we continue our march towards a more democratic, open, prosperous and caring society.

Among the biggest problems faced by the majority of the developing countries is how to provide employment for the youth, today and in the future. In today's interdependent world, no one country can solve this problem on her own, for this is indeed a global issue which can only be dealt with through a concerted efforts among nations. Interdependence and globalization also dictate that no one country, no matter how affluent or distant, can insulate herself from the misfortune of others. The prosperity of nations are now more intertwined than ever. To help our youths, we need to help each other. Economies which grow together allow peoples to prosper together. There is a wealth of unreaped benefits to be found in the sectors of agriculture, industry, services as well as in manufacturing, small scale and tourist industries. Once these sectors are managed fruitfully, we stand a higher chance to eradicate unemployment, especially youth employment.

Yet this matter is easier said than done. Education and training is believed to be a key answer. In fact education including training often raises value expectation more so than the value capabilities of the younger generation themselves to fulfil or absorb it.

Schools usually shy away from the aftermath services to link and to match between skillful youth and employment opportunities. Schools usually take no responsibility for their graduates and provide no services after their graduation. The skillful youth usually have to compete on their own for limited employment opportunities. Moreover, the opening of new employments is left at the mercy of foreign investors on whom new industrial development depends, rather than through entrepeneurship in small scale industries.

For young graduates to enter into the work places they need well documented data open to all, an on line and up to date information that can be accessed by the youth openly and equally. In some countries, job banks are now beginning to support employment opportunities.

Data should be collected and networking between industrial centers and all areas should be developed to link institutions to provide services for job seekers anywhere. In many countries, even in developed countries, data usually lag behind and equal access to information still elusive. Yet in the next millenium this is an instrument that is badly needed for job seekers. Otherwise, only those who are close to the source of information of employment opportunities can get jobs. This situation will in turn encourage nepotism, collusion and corruption as has happened in many countries.

Those who are far away from the source of employment opportunity are condemned to wait for their own time to come. Hence a process of waiting instead of proactively creating new employment opportunities at all time. Those who are better and more qualified are exempted especially if they are distanced away from the source of job information that is usually around the industrial centers. That leaves us to dwell more on the openings of new employment necessary to absorb as many young people into the work force. The latter need a different supportive instrument to translate opportunity into reality. It needs entrepreneurship and guidance by the specialist to transform hopes into realities.

Therefore for the next century, job banks are needed to provide equal access to all in a just society. Group entrepreneurship is therefore needed to absorb as many people as possible in large population countries. Group processes is therefore preferable rather than individual self help.

Hence ***"extension services"*** after training or schooling is definitely needed as we have proposed it as a new program and project in the ESCAP region recently. Extension services is also needed after credits provision by the bank as a humane gesture for those who understand the cruel nature of the existing banking system.

A situation has to be created to have a more just and equal partnership in any entrepreneurship venture without loosing sight of the successful venture itself. The extension services is no more schooling activities. The training for extension services is different than the ordinary guidance and counseling. It is networking and bridging at the same time. It is a service institution which provide a link between schooling and jobs openings.

We need an institution which provides inter link services between schooling, financial institutions, insurance, permit institutions and market access necessary to create new employment opportunities for the younger generations. Unless we create this new instrument known as the ***"extension services"*** i.e placement centers etc absorptive capacities of employment opportunities will be slower in moving or at least slower than the tempo needed to fulfill the satisfaction of the younger generation to create new employment in the country.

The function of the instrument is more than just counseling. It is helping people to help themselves to open up new frontiers in employment opportunities. As such, knowledge of new technologies and new opportunities should be enmeshed for those who care for others. " ***People whose satisfaction in life is for the usefulness of other fellow human being who are less knowledgeable than he is. People whose mission in life is in search of blessing of the Almighty God because of their service to their fellow men***".

Men who are less fortunate than the big conglomerate who can pay for the expensive consultant to create their new venture. We must care for the little people who are newcomers in entrepreneurships and business. With the staggering number of youth increasing day by day, this has become our major problem presently and in the future. Every other problem stems from this situation. The problem of street children, juvenile delinquency, vandalism, child prostitution, youth gangster, leisure time are just few examples. They are the result and not the cause of the problem of youth unemployment.

It is reasonable to expect that fighting poverty would be high on our agenda in the future. The masses of the unemployed youth are unskilled workers in search of help. Many young people risk their life by becoming cheap labor, working in unhealthy and risky workplaces or by crossing borders in search of employment.

We have to proclaim the right of youth to have a decent employment. We have to ensure that Governments in every country work hard and work together toward this end. The youth are entitled to have an education to ensure that they will be well prepared to live their own future. Hence future schooling should be revamped in such a way that it will be the place to get all the necessary facility for the youth to attain decent living in the future.

Schools should not be the center of knowledge and academic excellence only, but also for skillful training, for sports and recreation, for cultural advancement and strong religious inculcation to help shape the character of quality our youth to face the harsh future for the younger generation in the next millenium. Secular education should also be aided with spiritual knowledge.

We have to compete in the world on the basis of our goodness and not of our prejudices or past conflict. We can only work together on the basis of trust and real good intention without any other motive.

The Nakasone Program of the Twenty First century is a good example how young people work together in harmony. Friendship among Southeast Asian nations and Japan is made stronger than ever. I am aware that the programme left a lasting imprint in the minds of the participants. On the other hand we can still see remnants of ethnic cleansing of young people in the world today. Yet it is now emerging as a new phenomena. A dreadful idea for the younger generation to live in peace and harmony.

We have come a long way to build a better world for all of us to live in peace and harmony, but we still need to work even harder for the youth of the world to enjoy their freedom, democracy and prosperity more so than their elders. We have to explore new frontiers to make the younger generation live without fear or prejudice.

Such a scene is so encouraging for the future youth. As we finish our work in the next few days and on our way home we will remember how much have we accomplished for the betterment of our youth in the future. But again we might have to ponder what to do next after our conference here in Lisbon, Portugal. We might have to do more work and work out more solutions for the next generations.

By that time we would like you think of Indonesia as our next place to deliberate on these solutions for the youth of tomorrow. We would like you to consider Jakarta or Bali as the next place to sit together once more in a ***World Ministerial Conference on Youth***.

Thank you,

Agung Laksono